

# St Magdalen's Refuge Buckingham Street

1903 – 1936

**Other Names:**

- Buckingham Street Women's Refuge
- Mount Magdala

## Details

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St Magdalen's Refuge Buckingham Street Surry Hills (Strawberry Hills) was established by the Sisters of the Good Samaritan as a refuge for girls over the age of 12 years and for women in 1903, in Cleveland House. In 1936 the Buckingham Street Refuge became an aged care home and was no longer used for young women.

The property was acquired in 1903. Cleveland House, which is the oldest house in Sydney and dates from 1822, became the Convent for the Good Samaritan Sisters. A new building, the refuge, was added and opened by Cardinal Moran on 20 March 1904.

A *Sydney Morning Herald* article about the opening of the refuge described the extensions to the new building:

*The Refuge, which stands on land bounded by Castlereagh, Buckingham, and Bedford streets, has received a notable addition in this new building. Having proved inadequate for the demands made upon it the sisters had the new refuge, of four stories, with a frontage of 140ft to Buckingham Street, erected. The ground floor is a laundry, and includes receiving, sorting, washing, drying, starching ironing, and mangling rooms. On the first floor are kitchen, dining, and recreation rooms, while the upper floors are devoted to dormitories, infirmary. Dispensary, etc. One hundred and forty inmates are provided for.*

The aim of St Magdalen's was to provide women with a place of refuge in the city and restore them to friends or obtain suitable employment for them.

In 1946 the property was sold to the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary who used it for aged care, as had the Good Samaritans. In 1958 the NSW Society for Crippled Children purchased Cleveland House and the refuge. The refuge was converted to a hospital, clinic and administration.

In 1998 the buildings surrounding Cleveland House, including the refuge, were demolished, but the house survives. In 2010 the Heritage Council reported the house was in severe disrepair.

## Gallery



### Cleveland House [from Chalmers Street]

**Description:** Photograph by Stewart Watters of Cleveland House



### Cleveland House [from Bedford Street]

**Description:** Photograph by Stewart Watters of Cleveland House.

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## More info

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### Related Entries

**Run by**

- [Sisters of the Good Samaritan \(1857 - current\)](#)

### Resources

- Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes, *A piece of the story : national directory of records of Catholic organisations caring for children separated from families*, November 1999

## Records

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For more information and to access your records, follow the links below:

### Records

- [Records held by the Good Samaritan Archives relating to Children's Homes \(1877 - current\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/st-magdalens-refuge-buckingham-street/>